

## **Preserve WT Subcommittee Meeting**

**January 13, 2021**

**Via Zoom: Whit Griswold, Amy Upton, Heikki Soikkeli, Ivory Littlefield, Sam Look with Planning Board guests Bea Phear, Leah Smith, Henry Geller, Matt Merry in attendance.**

Bea: Can your acreage count towards increased house size? And if you use this excess acreage towards a bigger building could you later subdivide? PWT group answered no, you could not, if you have pledged all of your acreage towards the increased size.

Bea emphasized that it needs to be explicitly clear that using your acreage towards a bigger structure would prevent future subdivision (assuming you had maxed out the allowable sf and the special permit allowance. It is very possible you could subdivide if there were still sf & unpledged acres available).

PB asked to clarify that the 6000sf number is a moving target, that it increases/decreases with lot size.

Discussion of various accessory buildings and what should be in the scope of the bylaw: PWT asked what the PB thought about Pool Houses, Bea and Leah said yes include them in the aggregate.

Henry Geller commented that the bylaw needs to be able to work with a new set of potential definitions. The town is realizing that there are various ambiguities in the bylaws that need to be addressed, among them the definition for “studios”.

Matt Merry felt that Guest Houses should not be included in the 3500 sf cap.

Sam explained that a 4.5 acre lot would have more like a 3875 sf allowance (because of extra acreage) and the ability to go up to 6375 sf by special permit.

Leah said there is a problem with the ambiguity of barns. People build them for all sorts of reasons, some would be appropriate to count, some not.

Henry wondered what happens if an attic space is later finished. How would this work?

Matt shared that Chilmark brought forward lots of data and information to make a case for the need for such a bylaw.

PWT mentioned the packet that was presented at the Planning Board meeting in the Fall of 2019 when the group first came to present. Lots of WT data in that and rationale for bylaw in WT. Can recirculate that document.

Leah said that in the past when the PB canvassed townspeople about the need for a house size bylaw it was a pretty even split. Not a huge groundswell to address it.

Whit emphasized that if we are going to try and sell this idea we really need to be able to articulate the need.

Leah mentioned the current 3000 sf trigger that sends projects for PB review, but gives them no ability to say no. It would be useful to the PB to have a tool that allowed them to say no to permits if they felt it was justified.

Matt wondered about 3500sf+ houses that have been built in the last 2 years – how many, lot size. Sam will follow up with Joe T.

Brief discussion about a building's appropriateness in a neighborhood, more along the lines of architectural review, not just size related.

Whit expressed the opinion that PWT is not aiming to be the “taste police”, just addressing scale of the built environment.

Matt mentioned that most houses in Chilmark have a finished basement, a way for people to get space that does not count against their total.

PWT still trying to decide how to address basements. Possibly if a certain portion is above grade it will count. But don't want to penalize people for using space that is already there. Basements are great space to use if they are going to be there anyway and the net result is less above grade building mass.

Matt mentioned Wellesley as a possible resource for language, but they are more suburban and may be more along the lines of architectural review and historic purposes.

Meeting adjourned

Minutes approved January 23, 2021